



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

COOPERATIVE WOMANHOOD IN THE STATE.

BY MRS. MARY A. LIVERMORE.

SOME one has said that "civilization is organization." Certain it is that associated action for working purposes becomes possible only when society has attained a high state of development. It is the lowest matter in the scale that is unorganized, and of which we speak as inert, whether it be in the physical or social world. There is no surer indication of real advancement than the growing ability among men to subordinate complex and clashing interests, and to act jointly and harmoniously with each other for noble ends.

It was commonly believed in the near past that only half the human race possessed a fitness for organization; that only men knew how to specialize facts, combine for a definite purpose, and so translate isolated feebleness into associated strength without splitting into antagonisms that would defeat their aim. It was declared, *ex cathedra*, that women lacked this power; that they were emotional and sensitive, segregated by rivalries and unfaith in one another, unable to subject selfhood to efforts for the general well being; and that, therefore, solidarity of sentiment was not possible to them, nor unification of effort. There was an almost universal consensus of opinion among men on this point. And the facts superficially considered justified this belief. For there was a pitiful paucity of women's organizations in existence until little more than a quarter of a century ago. They were narrow in aim, limited in membership, rent with jealousies and petty scandals, and contemplated no larger results than the education of a theological student, the replenishing of a missionary's wardrobe, or the eking-out of the minister's salary.

The doors of a higher education were not widely open to women then, as now, and they sat in the retreating shadow of ignorance and injustice which has enshrouded them for ages. The predominance of physical force, as the governing power of the barbarous past, had compelled them to live in great isolation with regard to one another. They were weighted with needs and wrongs, and unacquainted with their rights and with the better

qualities of their common womanhood. It could not be expected that women would rise at once above the arbitrary standards of womanly inferiority steadily set before them. For the inheritance of traits of character is persistent, in proportion to the length of time they have been inherited. It is only through this general law of heredity that it is possible to account for the conservatism of many excellent women, who, from the beginning, have regarded with hostility the movements for the advancement of their sex.

Something more was necessary to arouse women, and to fuse and weld them into unified action, than the opening of doors of education and opportunity. There were needed the stimulus of a powerful appeal to their hearts, the menace of an impending danger to their homes and native land, a trumpet-call to duty that might not be disobeyed; and these came, simultaneously and with irresistible power, with the opening of the Civil War.

The great uprising among men, who ignored party and politics, and forgot sect and trade, in the fervor of their quickened love of country, was paralleled by a similar uprising among women. The incoming patriotism of the hour swept them to the loftiest height of devotion, and they were eager to do, to bear, or to suffer for the beloved country. "The earliest movement for army relief," says Dr. Bellows, "was begun by the women of the nation, and their zeal and devotion no more flagged through the war than did that of the army in the field." The barriers of sect, caste, and conventionalism, which had heretofore separated them, were burned away in the fervid heat of their loyalty. And patrician and plebeian, rich and poor, educated and ignorant, native and foreign-born, Protestant and Catholic, they all worked together, transformed by the spirit of the times into patriotic American citizens. They blundered in their first movements, as did the government in its early attempts to build up an effective army, and both learned by blundering.

President Lincoln, humane as were his instincts, greatly disapproved at first of this coöperative work of women for army relief, and withheld his indorsement of it for weeks, fearing lest it would prove "a dreadful fifth wheel to the coach," to quote his own language. And the highest officials of the government believed so little in the new organization, every day increasing in numbers, means, and effectiveness, that they only sought to render it harmless by "guiding it into a speedy nothingness." After

many hindrances, the Sanitary Commission received the indorsement of the administration, and slowly the obstacles in the path of the allied women vanished. They had, in reality, become a new volunteer arm of the service, only tolerated in the beginning, but at last trusted, respected, relied upon, and beloved. "I have never studied the art of paying compliments to women," said President Lincoln, some two and a half years later, in a public address at Philadelphia; "but I must say that if all that has been said by orators and poets since the creation of the world in praise of women was applied to the women of America, it would not do them justice for their conduct during this war."

At this time there were between ten and twelve thousand women's aid societies in existence, which, with an average membership of twenty,—and that is a small estimate,—included in the aggregate some two hundred thousand women. Banded together for a common cause, auxiliary to one Sanitary Commission, governed by the same laws, observing the same methods of work, sending all supplies gathered to one common depository, where they were at the service of any needy man who wore the army or navy blue, and all moneys made or collected to one common treasury, they slew sectionalism at the outset, and overcame the difficulties of coöperative undertakings at the very start.

It was understood that women were to raise the money and supplies for army relief, and that men were to disburse them; and this division of labor was observed throughout the war. But the women of the organization so largely outnumbered the men, whose multiform and arduous labors increased with the weary years, that large numbers of women became special disbursing and relief agents on the field, on hospital steamers and transports, in convalescent-camps, soldiers' homes, and elsewhere. There was great reluctance on the part of army surgeons to receive Protestant women nurses, even when their ability, training, and experience were vouched for by physicians at home. The Catholic sisters were preferred, and the first Protestant nurses sent to the hospitals of the Western army were rejected. But the powerful organization behind them appealed to Secretary Stanton, and the Protestant nurses carried the day. Hundreds of them were detailed to the service of nursing, and wrought side by side with the Catholic sisters in undisturbed friendliness, few of them asking or receiving compensation.

At the close of the war the Sanitary Commission, under whose auspices almost all the volunteer relief work of the army was done, made a general report of its labors to the people, whose agent it was and of whose beneficence it was the almoner. In its financial statement there is this estimate: "The aggregate of the receipts of the commission, of contributions in money to its branches and to their affiliated societies, of contributions of money's worth in goods, free transportation, etc., *cannot be less than twenty-five millions of dollars.*" It is no exaggeration to say that fully half of this vast amount found its way to the depository and treasury of the commission through the agency of its women's aid societies.

This was the first example of coöperative womanhood serving the state the world had ever witnessed, and as an education it was of incalculable value to women and to the nation. While they were working for the relief of the army, women studied the policy of the government, and learned what tremendous issues were at stake—the questions involved in the war and the immediate causes underlying it. They maintained a sturdy devotion to the national cause, lightened the gloom of every reverse, were undismayed by the discouragements of an embarrassed trade and commerce, which brought faintness to the hearts of men, and stoutly rebuked the manifestation of a disaffected, compromising, and unpatriotic spirit. All the while they maintained a prodigious correspondence with the soldiers in the army, "thus keeping the men in the field civilians," says Dr. Bellows, "and making the people at home, of both sexes, half-soldiers."

Not only did these women broaden in their views; they grew practical and executive in work. They learned how to coöperate intelligently with men; became expert in conducting public business, in calling and presiding over public meetings, even when men made a large part of the audience; learned how to draft constitutions and bylaws, to act as secretaries and committees; how to keep accounts with precision and system; how to answer, indorse, and file letters; how to sort their stores and keep an accurate account of stock; they attended meetings with regularity and promptness, and became punctilious in observance of official etiquette; in short, they developed rapidly a remarkable aptitude for business, on which men looked and wondered. "Where were these superior women before the war?" was frequently asked.

Above all, they learned one another, and found the world grown suddenly large for them, as they formed friendships with women from whom they had long held aloof because of local, sectarian, or personal jealousies and detractions. They had demonstrated the power of associated womanhood, when working harmoniously, and had awakened men to a consciousness that there were in women possibilities and potencies of which they had never dreamed. The lesson has not been forgotten. The young women of that day are the middle-aged women of the present time, better educated than their mothers, more self-poised, and instinct with vital interest in all that concerns the human race. The girls born during that period are our young women, who are coming on the stage better equipped for the work of life and with larger opportunities awaiting them than ever before dawned on a woman's vision. Colleges have been founded for them, scientific, professional ; art and industrial schools have opened their doors to them ; remunerative employments have given them entrance, sometimes in advance of their capacity and fitness ; while freedom of choice and action is the birthright of American women as of no others on the globe. Under these stimulating circumstances, what have women accomplished during the last quarter of a century ?

A magazine article would be altogether inadequate for even a condensed answer to this question,—and this paper treats only of women's coöperative work. The leading women of the various Protestant denominations were the first to utilize the coöperative spirit developed by the women of the war. They were painfully impressed with the fact that the foreign missionary associations, to which they were contributing, were not benefiting the women of heathen lands as they were the men, and for two reasons : the funds at their command were insufficient, and, in addition, the women of heathendom were inaccessible to men missionaries, because oriental custom compels their segregation from all male society, save that of their own households. Nor were the wives of the missionaries equal to the task of reaching the heathen women, for they were heavily burdened with their own family cares.

The war had just closed, the soldiers'-aid societies were disbanding, and it was not difficult to win some of the trained workers into a new field of action, especially as the object proposed was "the elevation of women." "Women's missionary boards"

were speedily formed in several denominations, which made "work for heathen women a specialty," and sent out "unmarried women missionaries to labor for their own sex." They established schools for the native women, and trained them in domestic, industrial, and religious matters. Women physicians, thoroughly educated and duly qualified, were added to the staff of missionary workers, who founded hospitals for women and children, established dispensaries, and trained native women in nursing. The first of these societies was organized less than twenty-five years ago, and the majority of them much later. But they are to-day so numerous that they report "a contributing membership of about one and a half million women, who raise and disburse about two millions of dollars every year." Their schools for women and girls, conducted by trained women teachers, are established by hundreds in all pagan and semi-civilized countries. Only educated single women are employed in the foreign work by these women's boards, and if they possess some grace or charm of manner it renders them more valuable for their self-imposed service. For the daily well-ordered life of a refined, devout, and cultivated young woman must be a perpetual education to the ignorant and down-trodden daughters of heathendom.

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union next came to the front—"an association that has become equally distinguished for the friends it has won and the enemies it has made." Its beginnings were small and humble, and its present magnitude and field of operations were not foreseen or provided for. It was the outcome of a protest made by Western women, a decade after the war, against the gross drunkenness of their neighborhoods, which was engulfing them, blighting their homes, defrauding their children, and consigning men, dear to them as their hearts' blood, to beggary, crime, disease, and ruin. The movement was phenomenal and exceptional, and ran like prairie-fire. It could not be copied, cannot be repeated, had its day, and soon spent itself; but it accomplished its work. Like a bugle-blast, it startled the women of the nation, compelled the attention of the country, and has eventuated in an organization which is compact, far-reaching, and dead in earnest. It is organized in every State and territory of the Union, each having its own headquarters, its auxiliary and tributary societies, the whole

controlled by a national union, whose headquarters are in Chicago, and which meets annually.

Its membership of adult women exceeds two hundred thousand, and is gaining at the rate of ten thousand a year, as was shown by last year's census. Any woman can join the union by signing a pledge of total abstinence from intoxicating beverages and paying her membership fee. For its only creed is "total abstinence for the individual and prohibition for the State." Affiliated with this organization, and under the same management, are large numbers of young women's unions,—“honoraries” that yield money, but have no voice in the direction of affairs, and “loyal legions” composed of children and youth verging on manhood and womanhood,—which swell the working contingent of the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union to something like three hundred and fifty thousand members.

The plant of its Women's Temperance Publishing Association was valued last January at \$56,934. It publishes three weekly papers, the largest of which attained last year an average weekly circulation of 90,327. During the same time it sent out 125,000,000 pages of literature, among which were books by well-known authors, and handled over \$200,000. Its admirable business manager is a woman of large experience and thorough training for her work; its stock sells readily and yields 6 per cent. interest; it can never be sold for less than par value, and then only to women members of the union. Its Woman's Building Association is erecting an immense building on La Salle Street, Chicago, in which the National Union will have headquarters and carry on its manifold and increasing work, and which will ultimately yield a superb income to its treasury. It is to be thirteen stories high, and will cost \$1,200,000. It will be ready for occupancy in May, 1892. When completed, the property will be worth two and a half million dollars. Its income from rentals will amount to a quarter of a million. A large number of the offices are already rented.

The objective aim of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union is, ultimately, the State. Its managers understand that whoever would change the laws of the republic can only do it by first changing the convictions of the people. They have thoroughly studied the whole question, and are confident that the abolition of the drinking-customs of the country will cause a corresponding reduction in the numbers of criminals, lunatics, paupers,

defective, dependent, and dangerous classes now afflicting the community. This belief furnishes the stimulus for their tremendous work and sacrifice, and the cohesive force of their organization. All their various religious beliefs and political preferences are subordinated to their one aim, and they all pull together with surprising unanimity, gaining something in one direction or another year by year. In eight years they have procured in thirty-five States, ten territories, and the District of Columbia the enactment of laws which compel the education of twelve million public-school children in the nature and physiological effects of alcoholic drinks and narcotics. If in some instances the laws lack force from defective legislation, the women who have made this their life-work remedy difficulties and enlarge and perfect their operations as they proceed. Over thirty other departments of work are organized inside the union, all of which converge towards the one great aim of the association—the cultivation of an enlightened sentiment, that will ultimately abolish drunkenness and extinguish the traffic in alcoholic drinks.

The Illinois Women's Alliance, with headquarters in Chicago, is composed of women sent as delegates from other organizations in the city, and is cosmopolitan in character. Men's organizations join by sending women as delegates. A Masonic chapter, O. E. S., a Christian-science association, aid societies, suffrage, medical, temperance, ethical, and hospital associations, with labor unions, are represented. The delegates of the Trade and Labor Assembly of Chicago represent a force of 25,000 men and women. Women of all classes of society, and from all sects, ignore their differences and unite in work to realize the aims of the alliance, which are as follows: (1) "to obtain enforcement of all laws enacted for the protection of women and children, and to secure the enactment of such laws as may be necessary"; (2) "to investigate all business establishments and factories where women and children are employed, and public institutions where women and children are maintained"; (3) "to procure the appointment of women as health inspectors, as members of boards of education, and to serve on boards of management of public institutions."

In an annual report of the alliance, made last February, there is the following statement of the work it has accomplished:

"It created great excitement by its labors with the City Council, petitioning that body to instruct the Board of Education to enforce the Compul-

sory-Education Law, which had been a dead-letter for several years, and at last gained its point. The enforcement of the law requires the work of twenty-five truant officers, thirteen of whom are women."

"It called public attention to the fact that one-quarter of the teachers' salaries, each year, was withheld for four months. In the course of the discussion it was brought out that the salaries of policemen and firemen were similarly curtailed each year. Somebody was using the money withheld, or drawing interest on it. The alliance continued the agitation until teachers, police, and firemen promptly received their money."

"It procured the enactment of an ordinance which has caused the appointment of five sanitary policewomen—the first in the world—to inspect the establishments where women and children are employed. They wear a star, and are admitted everywhere. It also caused the enactment of an ordinance forbidding the labor of children over eight hours a day, and the sale of cigarettes to minors under sixteen."

"It attended the meeting of the City Council, in a body five hundred women strong, to emphasize its demand for a second woman on the School Board. She was appointed in spite of the unwillingness of the mayor. It has visited and criticised twenty-six public institutions, for their permanent good."

It has standing committees who are working to procure free bathing establishments and a State school for dependent children, to effect organizations of women according to the political divisions of the city, to attend the County Court on days when homeless children are assigned to institutions, to attend the meetings of the Board of Education, and to visit in turn the public schools. The motto of the alliance is: "Loyalty to Women—Justice to Children!"

It was through the insistent, coöperative work of the women of Massachusetts, which stretched through nearly a dozen years, that the Women's Reformatory Prison was built at Sherborn, in the eastern part of the State, some fourteen or more years ago. It is a model institution of its kind, unsurpassed in the world, and is so wonderfully managed by the women officials who have it in charge that reformation of the majority of its women convicts is almost certain. Some six or seven years ago the women of the State united in another work for women criminals. A House of Detention for all women arrested, and police matrons to take charge of them, had become a necessity. Decency, respect for womanhood, and the proper care of women prisoners demanded it. The Women's Christian Temperance Unions, the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, the Women's Moral Education Association, the New England Women's Press Association, the Woman's Club, and four other large bodies of women joined in

petitions and work for the new prison accommodations. For five long years they waged an unceasing warfare with sluggishness, ignorance, and brutality, which had intrenched themselves on official boards and in police stations, and finally triumphed. The new House of Detention in Boston was opened in March, and receives four hundred women prisoners monthly, who are in charge of police matrons, and the first step in their recovery from evil is taken. More recently, another movement was made for the appointment of women factory inspectors, for the better oversight and protection of the women and girls employed in the various manufactories abounding in Massachusetts, and that reform was also accomplished.

The women of Massachusetts obtained the right to vote for school committees in 1879. It was so small an opportunity, and so hampered by restrictions and impossible conditions, as greatly to reduce its value in the minds of women. In the small towns of the State the methods of transacting the municipal business were such as to destroy the right altogether, for there was no opportunity given women to vote for school committees. In 1888 there came an occasion when women were able to accomplish something by using the fractional right doled out to them. The Boston School Committee, under the influence of Catholic politicians, had displaced some of the text-books in use, and introduced in their stead others, "expurgated and indorsed by a Baltimore Catholic Plenary Council." They had taken other steps, which were construed as Catholic aggressions on the public schools, and were condemned as unconstitutional and sectarian; and immediately, in advance of the action of men, organizations of women were formed to oppose them. Before the day of election, although the time was short, over 26,000 women had qualified to vote, and of these 19,000 went to the polls, and cast their ballots, in such inclemency of weather as kept hosts of men off the streets. They revolutionized the School Committee, and aroused, for the time, a public spirit that forbade the manipulation of the common schools in the interest of any sect.

In November, 1884, the Ladies' Health-Protective Association was organized in the city of New York, eleven women uniting with it. They began work by attacking the manure-yard of one Michael Kane, at the foot of East Forty-Sixth Street—the filthiest thing in the city. For years he had defiantly maintained

his monstrous nuisance, despite incessant complaints and a grand-jury indictment. In less than three months his manure-heap had disappeared. In 1886 he tried again, and by the aid of the Legislature sought to establish a permanent dumping-ground between Ninety-fifth and Ninety-seventh Streets. The women promptly rallied, fought him before the grand jury, and through two sessions of the Legislature, and utterly vanquished him. They then addressed themselves to some of the most difficult problems of city government, and accomplished the abatement of slaughter-house nuisances within the city limits and the repair or reconstruction of leaky gas-houses, compelled improvements in the conditions under which cows were kept and fed within the city, exposed the pollutions which were damaging the city's water-supply and brought about their removal, remedied the unsanitary conditions of many of the public schools, the methods of caring for women prisoners, and achieved the suppression of many minor nuisances.

The association wiped out "Little Italy," a district where a colony of Italians had crowded into hovels without the least regard to cleanliness and decency, and where the dirt, squalor, and moral corruption were indescribable. They are still at work, trying to secure public crematories for the disposition of garbage, to accomplish street-cleaning and other much-needed reforms. In the five years of their existence their numbers have increased from eleven to 700, all of whom coöperate in this hard work. They have been obliged to study the laws bearing on the evils they have sought to cure, to secure the opinion of experts, to give personal investigation to nuisances demanding abatement, to become acquainted with legal technicalities, to obtain the repeal, amendment, and enactment of statutes and ordinances. They have come in contact with the dark side of New York, and have visited localities in the prosecution of their work where the escort of several policemen was necessary to protect them from its low and rough classes. They have appeared before the Board of Health, courts, grand juries, and legislative committees—in short, "have done everything in the way of active participation in legitimate municipal politics, except to vote and hold office."

There are upwards of sixty coöperative societies of women, of national scope, engaged in the philanthropies of the country, like

the Women's Relief Corps, the King's Daughters, protective agencies for women and children, the working-girls' guilds, the women's educational and industrial unions, etc., and their aggregate membership runs up to half a million. They own and erect buildings for their work, disburse funds, look after defective, dependent, and delinquent classes of women and children, establish industrial schools, kindergartens, and day-nurseries, and do whatever other work comes to them for the helping of the age. One of them, the Ramabai Association, stands behind the school for high-caste Hindoo widows, in Poona, India, established and taught by the Pundita Ramabai, who three years ago canvassed America for funds to maintain her school until it should be self-supporting. She has erected a bungalow for her work with money contributed by American women.

The woman-suffrage societies are composed of men and women, in most localities, but the work is almost entirely done by women. The magnitude of the change contemplated by this reform has necessarily delayed it. "It involves a radical reconstruction of social ideas and usages all along the line of human relations," and will not be accomplished until the government, now composed of men alone, shall be changed into a government of men and women. "Twenty-three States have conceded the principle of woman suffrage by making women voters in school elections. Three States have given women the right to vote on liquor licenses. Kansas has given women suffrage in municipal elections. And Wyoming, after twenty-one years' experience as a woman-suffrage territory, has given women full suffrage and political equality through its State constitution." Under cover of the fire which has been kept up for nearly fifty years for women's enfranchisement, the whole social system has been changed. The legal status of wives, mothers, and widows has been greatly modified; education, self-support, and opportunity have been accorded to women; a larger conception of womanhood prevails, and the days of "women's subjection" are nearly ended. The agitation of the woman-suffrage question for half a century has made possible the large work of women to-day, in education, philanthropy, reform, and coöperative work.

Some six years since a Woman's National Council was organized in America, which meets once in three years in Washington, D. C. It is composed of delegates sent from national organiza-

tions of women only, and at the last meeting of the council, in February, between fifty and sixty of these were represented. Reports were made of the work and gain of women during the past three years, plans were outlined for the future, and the needs, aims, and ideals of women came under general discussion. The audiences were very large, composed mostly of women, serious, attentive, punctual, and enthusiastic. So manifest is the tendency of women at the present time to draw more closely together, to keep touch with each other in thought and purpose, to unite in an organization "superior to any existing society," that the retiring president presented a plan of federation that would accomplish this.

If accepted, there would be organized "within the national government, as carried on by men, a republic of women, duly organized and officered, in no wise antagonistic to men, but conducted as much in their interest as in that of women. It would promote mutual fellowship among women, and establish solidarity of sentiment and purpose throughout the nation of women workers. It would put a premium on organized as against isolated efforts for human betterment. It would train women for the next great step in the evolution of humanity, when women shall sit side by side in government, and the nations shall learn war no more."

Whatever may be the fate of this plan for a national federation of women, one thing is certain. Women have learned the omnipotence and happiness of coöperative work, and the weakness and weariness of that which is isolated. And this is sure to make them more fruitful of accomplishment hereafter, whether their plans of work shall include themselves, their homes and their children, society or the nation.

"For the cause that lacks assistance,
'Gainst the wrong that needs resistance,
For the future in the distance,
There's a woman's right to do!"

MARY A. LIVERMORE.